



St. Patrick's Catholic Primary School Newsletter - Issue 13 – 6th December 2024

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Dear Parents, Carers & Parishioners,

It has been a busy week in school and we have once again been very proud of the children. Class 2 led a wonderful Advent Celebration of the Word for the rest of the school and Mrs Griffiths and her choir entertained a packed hall with their wonderful Christmas songs. The fun continues next week as we welcome you all to school for the Christmas performances and Christmas dinner day.

Have a great weekend,

Sam Keys

Christmas performances

The tickets for the Christmas performances were sent out with pupils last night—if you have any problems, please contact the office as soon as possible. The children and staff have been working hard and the rehearsals have sounded fantastic.

Reception and Class 2—9:30am on Tuesday 11th December - Drop the children at school as normal. Parents can then wait in the school yard.

Class 3 and Class 4—5pm on Wednesday 12th December - Children to be collected from school as normal and returned at approximately 4:40pm to be prepare for the performance.



Christmas Jumper Day

Children (and staff!) can come into school in Christmas jumpers on Thursday 12th December. **This is a non-uniform day.** Please do not feel the need to buy a Christmas jumper just for this day.



Christmas Dinner Day

We are looking forward to welcoming many of you for Christmas dinner day on Thursday 12th December:

- Parents/carers of children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 who have booked can join us for 11:30am.
- Parents/carers of children in Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 who have booked can join us for 12:30pm.
- **If you have children across the 2 dinner sittings—please join us for the 11:30am slot.**

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Travelling Crib

Our travelling crib sets have started to make their way into homes this week. If your child is particularly excited about having the crib, do let us know!



School Admissions Reminder

Is your child due to start Primary School in September 2025? You can now apply for their school place. The deadline for applications is

- **Wednesday 15th January 2025** for primary school places.

Apply now: <http://www.durham.gov.uk/schooladmissions>



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Attendance

Procedure for appointments during school hours

If you have to take your child out of school for any reason, including a medical, dental, school visit appointment, please could you inform the school office prior to the appointment along with any supporting evidence of the appointment. This is so that we can authorise the absence where we can and your child is not marked as unauthorised in our register.

Please see below guidance from the government regarding school attendance. <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>

Children should aim to arrive in school by 8.55 am at the latest. **Persistent lateness causes disruption to your child's education.**

Holidays in term time

It is Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust policy that we as a school must refer to the local authority when a child takes holiday during term time. You can see Durham's procedures here: [Holidays in term time - Durham County Council](#)

"Where leave of absence has not been granted, but the pupil does not attend, the headteacher will refer the case to the local authority in line with the National Framework. This may lead to the local authority issuing a fixed penalty notice." - BWCET Attendance Policy

Year	Attendance this week:
R	77.78%
1 / 2	78.43%
3 / 4	94.12%
5 / 6	95.86%
Weekly Overall Attendance: 88.12%	
Yearly Attendance to date: 95.28%	

Standards at St. Patrick's

Our expectations on attendance must remain strong and, as the parent community know, we take this part of our job very seriously indeed. We will be contacting parents/carers of those children who are persistently absent, this means any child with an attendance percentage of 90% or less. Please understand that this is a supportive measure and that we are working hard to leave no stone unturned to help your child achieve the very best possible outcomes.



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HOUSE POINTS				
Feast Days:	St. Bede	St. Cuthbert	St. Hilda	St. Aidan
25th May				
20th March				
17th November				
31st August				
Weekly total	541	674	594	535
Running total	5197	5008	5062	5970

You will see your child's house points add up throughout the week via Class Dojo. This will only be used for house points this year and not school to home communication.

Stars of the week

George Year R For great reading and phonics.

Georgia Year 1 / 2 For brilliant singing in the choir concert.

Lily Year 3 / 4 For great determination while learning her times tables.

James Year 5 / 6 For a positive attitude.

Rainbow Rewards

Red	Is for the blood he gave (Be Kind)	Isobel and Amelie
Green	Is for the world he made (Be a steward)	Oliver B, and Oscar G
Yellow	Is for the light so bright (Be humble)	Dylan
Orange	Is strong and full of might (Be courageous)	
Purple	Is for his hour of sorrow (Be compassionate and say sorry)	
Pink	Is for a new tomorrow (Be just and fair)	
Blue	Is for the sky he made so we can aim high (Never give up or take the easy option)	

The rainbow is a sign of God's promise,
 He will guide us through any storm.
 When you feel battered by life's storms,
 Just remember God's rainbow is coming -
 It's only a prayer away.

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Ask your child



We're sure you all ask your children what they have learned at school every day. We're also sure that the depth of answers that you receive will also vary, with some children saying, 'nothing'. To help aid your discussions, each week in the newsletter we will include a starter question that will help your child to talk about what they have been learning that week in school. Try it tonight.

Reception (Class 1)	Who went to visit Jesus when he was born?
Class 2	What is a quadrilateral?
Class 3	What does logic mean?
Class 4	Can we make a red apple blue?
General	How many candles are on an advent wreath?

Article 14: The right of freedom of thought, belief and religion



THE GOSPEL IN CHURCH Sunday 8th December 2024



At the time when Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of Judaea, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah, who was living in the desert. John went through the whole Jordan district proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the sayings of the prophet Isaiah: 'A voice cries in the wilderness; prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley will be filled in, every mountain and hill be laid low, winding ways will be straightened and rough roads made smooth. And all people will see the saving power of God.'

Adapted from Luke 3:1-6
The 2nd Sunday of Advent, Year C

Dear Lord Jesus, please help us to **prepare** our hearts to receive and to share more of your love as Christmas approaches. Amen.

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What Parents & Educators Need to Know about MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING APPS

When looking at options for supporting a child's mental health, the sheer volume can be overwhelming. There are many wellbeing apps available, but unfortunately not all are trustworthy. It's important to evaluate which resources are suitable, reliable and effective. This guide lets you know what to consider before installing such an app, to determine just how useful it's going to be.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

QUALITY & RELIABILITY

Mental health apps can be a useful starting point when looking for wellbeing advice and strategies and can be a useful extension to the in-person services available. However, they aren't a substitute. Information on the quality of some of these apps is scarce. They may look cute and child-friendly, but have they been designed by a mental health professional? Furthermore, do they have research to back up their content?

PLACE RESPONSIBILITY ON CHILDREN

Some apps add the words 'kids' or 'children' to their title or use cartoon icons to make them more appealing to young people. When signing up for some of these apps, some will speak to the parent directly, saying something along the lines of "Your child is good to go. Let them take it from here". It's important to remain involved in the child's mental health journey, so regular check-ins are recommended.

DISREGARDING APPROPRIATE SUPPORT

Young people who feel anxious and have trouble sleeping may download a mindfulness app to help. While this is a good strategy initially, it's not addressing the root of the problem. A child could simply try managing these symptoms themselves (as opposed to speaking out and seeking professional help), which could potentially worsen their anxiety in the long run.

LACK OF PERSONALISATION

Mental health or wellbeing apps are useful tools for the short term, teaching users several helpful habits to manage their condition – such as keeping an illness diary, improving nutrition and practising mindfulness exercises. As every person is unique – and children especially will grow and develop in different ways – these apps struggle to tailor themselves to users' individual needs. For example, many apps don't distinguish between the ages of users and can offer extremely generic advice.

DATA SECURITY

As with any other app – not just those for mental health and wellbeing – it's wise to check out the privacy policy before downloading it. Some of these applications may share data with third parties for numerous reasons (such as targeted advertisements), and if a user is sharing personal and sensitive information within the app, they probably don't want it ending up elsewhere without their consent.

IN-APP PURCHASES

Many apps will provide their most basic features for free but will require you to pay for other aspects – such as a more tailored experience or access to additional resources. This could be a one-off fee or a regular subscription. Consider whether this is actually required. Is it benefiting the child, or could they receive the same support from a medical professional?

Advice for Parents & Educators

CHECK THE CREDIBILITY OF THE APP

Before you download a mental health and wellbeing app, investigate the developers. Have they consulted with qualified mental health professionals to create their resource? Also check whether the app is affiliated with any government or mental health organisations, as these are solid indicators of legitimacy. Reviews can also be a useful signpost to the app's quality. There are many good apps out there, but there are just as many that miss the mark.

SEEK PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

Trusted mental health and wellbeing apps designed by qualified, reputable organisations can be used alongside the personalised advice and support of fully trained professionals. These apps should never be considered a substitute for counselling or other tailored medical help. If you have real concerns about a child's mental wellbeing, you should seek appropriate advice from a suitable source, such as their GP – or Childline, who can be contacted by calling 0800 1111.

READ THE PRIVACY POLICY

Look into the app's terms of service – especially its privacy policy. Do so by yourself first, then go over it with the child who is considering using the app, to ensure they know what data will be collected and how exactly it will be used. Use all of this information to make an educated decision on whether or not to download that particular app.

ENCOURAGE OPEN COMMUNICATION

Mental health and wellbeing apps can be useful for writing down feelings, tracking your own health and other such activities. These can help if the problem is short-term and temporary – such as a child getting stressed about approaching exams – or if you're currently waiting for professional support. Nonetheless, it is important that children aren't solely reliant on the app and have a safe space to talk about their feelings and experiences in the real world.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



The National College

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/mental-health-apps>

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Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 04.12.2024

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New or changed dates in **blue**.

Date	Event	Time	Parents Invited
Tuesday 10.12.24	EYFS & KS1 Christmas Production	9:30am	Yes
Wednesday 11.12.24	KS2 Christmas Production	5pm	Yes
Thursday 12.12.24	Christmas Jumper Day	All Day	No
Thursday 12.12.24	Christmas Dinner Day	11:30am & 12:30pm	Yes
Monday 16.12.24	Christmas Party Day	All Day	No
Tuesday 17.12.24	Pantomime	Morning	No
Wednesday 18.12.24	Christmas Fair	2pm	Yes
Thursday 19.12.24	Carols—In Church	9:30am	Yes
Friday 20.12.24	End of Term	3:25pm	-

Spring Diary Dates on the next page!

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Date	Event	Time	Parents Invited
Tuesday 7.1.25	Return to school for Spring 1st Half Term	8:55am	-
Thursday 23.1.25	Coffee Morning - Focus on SEND	9:15am	Yes
Thursday 30.1.25	Year 4 Parent Tables Check Meeting	4pm	Yes
w/b Monday 3.2.25	Children's Mental Health Week	All Week	No
Tuesday 11.2.25	Safer Internet Day	All Day	No
Tuesday 11.2.25	Year 6 Parent SATS Meeting	4pm	Yes
Tuesday 11.2.25	Year 1 Parent Phonics Meeting	3:30pm	Yes
Wednesday 19.2.25	Class 2 RE Topic Liturgy	9:15am	Yes
Friday 21.2.25	Break up for half-term holiday	3:25pm	-
Monday 3.3.25	Return to school for Spring 2nd Half Term	8:55am	-
Thursday 6.3.25	World Book Day: - Non-Uniform and 'Breakfast with a book'	All Day	Yes (8:30—8:55)
w/c Monday 10.3.25	Science Week	All Week	-
Monday 10.3.25	Reception Stay and Discover (Parent and Pupil sessions)	8:55am—10:30am	Yes
Tuesday 11.3.25	Class 4—Learn with me (Parent and Pupil sessions)	1:15pm – 3:25pm	Yes
Wednesday 12.3.25	Class 2—Learn with me (Parent and Pupil sessions)	1:15pm – 3:25pm	Yes
Thursday 13.3.25	Class 3—Learn with me (Parent and Pupil sessions)	1:15pm – 3:25pm	Yes
Friday 14.3.25	CAFOD Family Fast Day	TBC	TBC
Monday 17.3.25	St. Patrick's Day Celebrations: Non-uniform—wear something green	All Day	No
Friday 21.3.25	Interim Reports go out	3:30pm	-
Friday 21.3.25	Comic Relief: non-uniform day	All Day	No
w/c Monday 24.3.25	Parents Evenings	3:40pm - 6:00pm	Yes
Friday 28.3.25	Someone Special Celebration	2:30pm	Yes
Thursday 3.4.25	Easter Choir Concert TBC	4pm	Yes
Friday 11.4.25	Break up for Easter holiday	3:25pm	Yes
Monday 28.4.25	Return to school for Summer Term	8:55am	Yes